



# STATE SENATOR JOHNNY NUGENT

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**SEN. JOHNNY NUGENT**  
200 W. WASHINGTON STREET  
INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46204  
1-800-382-9467

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## SEN. NUGENT: BILLS I SUPPORTED THIS SESSION

✓ **INDEPENDENT RESEARCH:** In an effort to make the legislative branch less dependent on lobbyists for research on public policy topics, Senate Enrolled Act 84 allows lawmakers and the non-partisan Legislative Services Agency to access state-funded research resources at Indiana colleges and universities. Feasibility of establishing a research and policy development division will also be explored.

✓ **AG ASSESSMENTS:** Senate Enrolled Act 396 uses an adjusted rolling average that eliminates the highest assessed value over a six-year period. Known by economists as the "Modified Olympic Average" technique, the model should provide farmers and local governments more stable agricultural property assessments and be more representative of true market value.



✓ **SCHOOL FUNDING FLEXIBILITY:** House Enrolled Act 1367 provides schools the flexibility to claim money normally dedicated to capital projects and use it for instructional purposes. Schools agreeing to pay freezes for staff would be allowed to transfer more money. This measure will provide nearly \$82 million statewide to prevent school employee layoffs and help preserve instructional programs.



✓ **DRUNKEN DRIVING:** Legislation designed to stiffen penalties against drunken drivers also memorializes an innocent victim, an Indiana family's unborn son. In 2007, Danielle Brookshire lost her unborn son in a car crash believed to be caused by a drunken driver. Lawmakers worked with Brookshire and local prosecutors on the bill's language.



# SEN. JOHNNY NUGENT

SERVING SENATE DISTRICT 43 TAXPAYERS



## JOBS: LAWMAKERS FIGHT NEW SPENDING, NEW TAXES; PASS PRO-JOBS INITIATIVES TO HELP HOOSIERS

**W**ith little time and no money, lawmakers worked this short session to maintain Indiana's pro-job climate of low taxes and limited regulation.

Senators kept a close, careful eye on proposed legislation and amendments to avoid new state expenditures and government intervention that would have raised taxes and imposed red tape during already hard times for Indiana's workforce and employers.

Gov. Mitch Daniels, with the support of Senate Republicans, rightly reacted to tumbling state revenues by cutting government spending, flat-lining state payrolls and freezing all but essential hiring. To date, state bureaucracies have cut 20 percent from operating budgets. Reluctantly, higher education funding has been reduced 6 percent and public K-12 schools – nearly half of the state budget – have been asked to find 3 percent in new cost savings and efficiencies to help save classroom teachers' jobs.

Senators also successfully delayed \$400 million in new unemployment insurance premiums from going into effect in 2010. By

avoiding premium increases, lawmakers hope employers large and small will be in stronger positions to retain or add employees.

Lawmakers also passed initiatives to help Hoosiers recover from the national recession:

- **New Employer Tax Credits** will be offered to businesses re-

locating or incorporating in Indiana. Qualified businesses must hire 10 or more full-time employees, not including owners.

- **Small Business Tax Credits** will be expanded to make small employers with fewer than 35 workers eligible for Economic Development for a Growing Economy (EDGE) credits.

- **Small Business Ombudsman** will be an advocate for small employers with state agencies, helping navigate regulations, streamline paperwork and coordinate due

dates. Also, the ombudsman will monitor outdated, ineffective and overly burdensome reporting requests and red tape.

- **H.I.R.E.** (Helping Indiana Re-start Employment) initiative will offer tax incentives to employers who hire and train unemployed and underemployed Hoosiers.



## ETHICS REFORMS

Lawmakers proactively passed a comprehensive ethics reform package aimed at improving transparency in government and providing greater accountability over state leaders.

House Enrolled Act 1001 creates a one-year cooling off period before a retired legislator could become a lobbyist and requires uniform reporting by all lobbyists. The measure further reduces the threshold for reported one-time lobbyist expenses from \$100 to \$50 a day and drops the annual total from \$500 to

\$250.

Reforms include expanding registration and reporting requirements for legislative liaisons of state agencies and universities. The law prohibits statewide officeholders, other than the governor, from appearing or using their name in advertisements funded with state-appropriated dollars, unless approved by a budgetary oversight committee. Also, statewide officeholders and statewide candidates are barred from campaign fundraising during budget-writing sessions.

## GUN RIGHTS

Lawmakers approved two key bills protecting the rights and privacy of Indiana gun owners.

House Enrolled Act 1068 aims to keep the names, addresses and other identifying information of more than 300,000 Hoosiers with handgun licenses – also referred to as concealed carry permits – confidential, like tax records. The measure would allow colleges, universities and journalists to access race, gender and other non-identifying information for research

purposes.

House Enrolled Act 1065 prohibits most businesses from enacting policies that prevent licensed gun owners from keeping legal firearms in their locked vehicles. However, workers would have to follow strict guidelines. Employees must store their firearms out of sight in consoles, glove boxes or trunks of locked vehicles. Exceptions to the measure include school properties, child care facilities and critical infrastructure like power plants.